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ABSTRACT

The job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in public rehabilitation agencies in Alabama are the focus of this study. Participants were 87 rehabilitation counselor survey respondents whose agencies agreed to take part in the study. A total of 151 surveys were mailed. Job satisfaction was measured using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. The three components of organizational commitment (affective, normative, and continuance) were examined using the Organizational Commitment Scales. Potential predictor variables examined were: (1) years of service; (2) age; (3) education level; (4) Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) status; (5) conscientiousness; (6) initiative; (7) cooperation; and (8) attendance/punctuality. Results indicate that work behaviors are important predictors of overall job satisfaction, emotional, and normative attachment of counselors toward the agencies for which they work. Because both job satisfaction and emotional attachment have been linked to higher levels of productivity, public rehabilitation agencies are encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those counselor behaviors (conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation) which are most predictive of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. Contains two appendices: (1) Job Satisfaction Items and (2) Organizational Commitment Items. (JBJ)

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PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: ALABAMA

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG STATE AGENCY REHABILITATION COUNSELORS: ALABAMA

This study examined the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of rehabilitation counselors working in public rehabilitation in Alabama.

Demographic Information

Eighty-seven (87) out of 151 surveys were returned. The following demographic questions were asked:

1. How long had the counselors worked with their state agencies?
2. How old were the counselors?
3. Did the counselors have masters or bachelor's degrees?
4. Were the counselors Certified Rehabilitation Counselors?

The counselors ranged in years worked as a counselor in Alabama from 3 months to 28 years, with a mean of 10 years. They ranged in age from 26 to 66 years with a mean age of 43 years. Seventy-two (72) of the counselors had master's degrees or higher, 13 reported having bachelor's degrees, and 2 did not indicate their educational attainment. Twenty-one (21) counselors indicated that they were Certified Rehabilitation Counselors while 64 said they were not. Two (2) counselors did not report their certification status.

I. JOB SATISFACTION

The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire developed by Weiss, Dawis, England, & Lofquist, (1967) was used to measure job satisfaction. Cook, Hepworth, Wall, & Warr (1982) describe the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire as a sound measure of overall job satisfaction. The questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale with the following values:

1 = Very dissatisfied
2 = Dissatisfied
3 = I cannot decide whether I am satisfied or not
4 = Satisfied
5 = Very satisfied

A copy of the items can be found in Appendix A. Upon the completion of data collection, two items were deleted from the instrument: (a) being able to do things that do not go against my decisions, and (b) the chance to tell people what to do. Item a was deleted because the majority of respondents felt it was too ambiguously worded. Item b was deleted because the overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that their jobs did not provide opportunities for supervision and that, when working with clients, it was not part of their responsibilities/philosophy to "tell others what to do." With the deletion of these items, possible scores could range from 18-90. Using Cronbach's Alpha, a new reliability coefficient was calculated. Reliability was found to be .87.

The range of scores from Alabama (based on 79 usable surveys) was from 32-89 with a mean of 72.10 and a standard deviation of 10.47. This compares with a mean of 66.86 and a standard deviation of 10.90 for the national sample.

Data Analysis

The following question guided analysis of the data:

Can the job satisfaction of Alabama DRS counselors be predicted by any of the following variables: (a) years of service, (b) age, (c) education level, (d) CRC status, (e) conscientiousness, (f) initiative, (g) cooperation, and (h) attendance/punctuality.

Work behaviors came from the national sample and were determined in the analysis were determined in the following fashion. The participants were given a list of 15 work behaviors and were asked to respond to each work behavior using a Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree." The responses were then subjected to a factor analysis with a varimax rotation to identify work behavior groupings. Only those behaviors with a factor loading of .60 or higher were included in each group. Work behavior grouping were as follows:

Conscientiousness

I pay attention to details at work
I do my work thoroughly and completely
I have a concern for quality

Initiative

I am willing to volunteer for tasks
I give personal time to the agency
I show enthusiasm about my work
I am willing to take on extra responsibility

Cooperation

I share knowledge and information with others
I offer work suggestions to others

Attendance/Punctuality

I am late for work
I am absent for work

Correlations among the independent variables of the study can be found in Table 1. The examination of correlations among the independent variables of a study in which predictions will be made is important to rule out multicollinearity. Multicollinearity exists when two variables are so highly correlated that it is difficult to determine which variable is actually predictive. One correlation of substantial magnitude was found: As age increased, years employed increased. When interpreting the following analyses, the reader is cautioned that, in those instance where either age or years employed are significant predictors, it may not be possible to determine which variable accounted for the most variance.

Table 1.

Correlations: Independent Variables

	Age	CRC	Educat	Conscie	Initiative	Coopera	Att/Pun	Years
Age	1.00	-.12	-.01	.13	-.10	-.04	.07	.62**
CRC	-.12	1.00	.15	.16	.10	.03	.17	-.33**
Education	-.01	.15	1.00	.13	.16	-.03	.00	-.13
Conscientious	.13	.16	.13	1.00	-.05	.23*	.11	.15
Initiative	-.10	.10	.16	-.05	1.00	.24*	.06	-.19
Cooperation	- .04	.03	-.03	.23*	.24*	1.00	-.10	.13
Att/Punctuality	.07	.17	.00	.11	.06	-.10	1.00	-.03
Years	.62**	-.33**	-.13	.15	-.19	.13	-.03	1.00

*p < .05; **p < .01

The research question was answered through stepwise multiple regression analysis. The results of this analysis can be found in Table 2.

Table 2.

Predictors of Job Satisfaction

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Conscientiousness	4.49	1.439	.310	3.12	.00**
Initiative	1.94	.868	.221	2.23	.02**
Cooperation	3.08	.895	.350	3.44	.00**

*p < .05; **p < .01

The most significant positive predictor of job satisfaction was cooperation. This was followed, in descending order, by conscientiousness and initiative. Age, years employed, CRC status, education, and attendance/punctuality did not predict job satisfaction. As cooperation increased, so did job satisfaction. The same was found with initiative and conscientiousness.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Organizational commitment refers to the dedication that employees feel toward the organizations for which they work. It has been defined as "the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization" (Porter, Steers, Mowday, & Boulian, 1974, p. 604). It also has been related to the energy that employees expend on behalf of the organizations for which they work.

Meyer & Allen (1991) conceptualized organizational commitment as having three components: (a) affective, (b) normative, and (c) continuance. Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment that an individual has for the organization in which he or she works. Normative commitment refers to the individual's attachment to an organization because of values relating to loyalty. Continuance commitment refers, primarily, to an individual's attachment to the organization for which he or she works because the costs of leaving the organization would be too high. Workers operating from an affective model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the organization because they *want* to. Workers operating from a normative model of commitment expend energy on behalf of the organization because the believe they *should*. Persons in the continuance model expend energy on behalf of their organizations because they feel they *have* to.

Affective, normative, and continuance commitment can occur simultaneously, although they are individual constructs (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1991). The effects of each component on job performance, however, may differ. Meyer et al. (1989) stated that, when the primary commitment to an organization is affective, the organization may benefit in terms of "superior" performance. Normative commitment may also be positively reflected in work performance. When the primary commitment is continuance, relatively poor performance may be evident.

This study examined the affective, normative, and continuance commitment of rehabilitation counselors using the Organizational Commitment Scales developed by Allen and Meyer (1989). Items

can be found in Appendix B. Previous research using these scales has shown relative independence among the three components of organizational commitment, although a relationship may exist between affective and normative commitment. From a current sample of over 2,000 rehabilitation counselors, the following correlations were found:

	Affective	Normative	Continuance
Affective	1.00	.50**	.05
Normative	.50**	1.00	.06
Continuance	.05	.06	1.00

**p< .01

A significant relationship was found between affective and normative commitment. The magnitude of this relationship, however, is not sufficient to conclude that they are measuring the same construct. Previous researchers using these scales have found reliability coefficients ranging from .74 to .89 (Affective), .69 to .84 (Continuance), and .69 to .79 (Normative). In the national sample, the following reliability coefficients were found: Affective (.66); Continuance (.75); Normative (.70). The following questions guided the research:

1. **What are the affective, normative, and continuance commitment levels of rehabilitation counselors working for Alabama's Department of Rehabilitation Services?**

2. **Can Alabama DRS counselors' affective, normative, and continuation commitment be predicted using the following variables: (a) age, (b) years working as a counselor with the agency, (c) CRC status, (d) education (e) conscientiousness, (f) initiative, (g) cooperation, and (h) attendance/punctuality?**

Question 1

For each area of commitment, scores on this instrument can range from 8-56. The following scores were obtained:

Affective Commitment	Mean = 37.57	SD = 7.49	n = 87
Normative Commitment	Mean = 35.56	SD = 7.52	n = 84
Continuance Commitment	Mean = 36.95	SD = 8.98	n = 86

While mean differences are negligible, it appears that Alabama's rehabilitation counselors have higher levels of affective (emotional) commitment to their agency than they do normative and continuance commitment. For the national study, the order was continuance, affective, normative.

Question 2

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to investigate demographic and behavioral correlates of affective, normative, and continuance commitment. Demographic variables were age, education, CRC status, and years employed as a counselor with the state agency. Behavioral variables were conscientiousness, initiative, cooperation, and attendance/punctuality. Table 3 presents the results of the analysis for affective commitment.

Table 3.

Multiple Regression: Affective Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Conscientiousness	4.33	1.07	.406	4.04	.00**
Cooperation	1.71	.68	.251	2.50	.01**

*p <.05; **p < .01

Two variables, conscientiousness and cooperation, were predictive of affective commitment. These two variables accounted for 28% of the variance associated with affective commitment. A summary of results follows:

1. Conscientiousness was most predictive of affective commitment. The more counselors reported having concern for quality, doing their work thoroughly and completely, and paying attention to details at work, the greater was their level of emotional attachment to the organization.

2. Cooperation was a positive predictor with affective commitment. Counselors who were willing to share knowledge and information and offer work suggestions to others were more emotionally attached to their organizations.

Table 4 illustrates multiple regression analysis for normative commitment.

Table 4.

Multiple Regression: Normative Commitment

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	p
Conscientiousness	3.97	1.17	.363	3.38	.00**

*p < .05; **p < .01

Conscientiousness was the only variable predictive of normative commitment. As conscientiousness increased, so did normative commitment. This variable accounted for 13% of the variance associated with normative commitment.

Continuance Commitment

None of the independent variables were predictive of continuance commitment.

DISCUSSION

Job satisfaction and organizational commitment among public-rehabilitation counselors may ultimately be reflected in the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities. Public (state/federal) agencies employing rehabilitation counselors should pay attention to those variables which are predictive of both job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

In the national sample, work behaviors appeared to be most important to rehabilitation counselors' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment. The same was found for Alabama's public rehabilitation counselors. State/federal rehabilitation agencies wishing to enhance the job satisfaction and, in particular, affective commitment of its counselors are advised to consider ways to reward those behaviors which reflect conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation. Offering rewards (e.g., in the form of positive verbal reinforcement or letters to the counselor from administrators) for correct and complete case documentation, attention to details, and evidence of quality case services might serve to enhance satisfaction and emotional commitment. While these behaviors will typically lead to successful case closures, attention focused exclusively on outcome (i.e,

# of 26 closures) rather than process may leave counselors feeling disempowered and unappreciated and may, ultimately, result in decreased work performance.

The overall patterns of commitment in this study appear positive. As a group, Alabama's counselors operated primarily from the affective component of commitment. This component has been linked with superior performance.

The relatively high level of continuance commitment may warrant consideration. While it is important for agencies to provide incentives through work benefits (i.e., insurance, retirement, etc.), counselors operating from a continuance model may have less productivity than those operating primarily from an affective or normative perspective. While Alabama's rehabilitation counselors operated primarily from the affective component of commitment, there was no substantial difference between their affective and continuance commitment levels. Again, public rehabilitation agencies need to emphasize (and reward) those behaviors that positively relate to affective and normative commitment as possible ways to reduce continuance commitment.

SUMMARY

The results of this study of the job satisfaction and organizational commitment of Alabama's public agency rehabilitation counselors indicate that work behaviors are important predictors of the overall job satisfaction, emotional, and normative attachment of counselors toward the agencies for which they work. Because both job satisfaction and emotional attachment have been linked to higher levels of productivity, public rehabilitation agencies are encouraged to develop ways of rewarding those counselor behaviors (conscientiousness, initiative, and cooperation) which are most predictive of job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment.

APPENDIX A

JOB SATISFACTION ITEMS

On my present job, this is how I feel about:

1. Being able to keep busy all the time
2. The chance to work alone on the job
3. The chance to do different things from time to time
4. The chance to be "somebody" in the community
5. The way my boss handles his/her workers
6. The competence of my supervisor in making decisions
7. Being able to do things that do not go against my decisions*
8. The way my job provides for steady employment
9. the chance to do things for other people
10. The chance to tell people what to do*
11. The way company policies are put into practice
12. My pay and the amount of work I do
13. The chances for advancement on the job
14. The freedom to use my own judgement
15. The working conditions
16. The way my co-workers get along with each other
17. The praise I get for doing a good job
18. The feeling of accomplishment I get from the job

*Deleted from final analysis

APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ITEMS

Affective Commitment

I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this agency

I enjoy discussing my agency with people outside of it

I really feel as if this agency's problems are my own

I think I could easily become as attached to another agency as I am to this one (Reversed)

I do not feel like "part of the family" at my agency (Reversed)

I do not feel "emotionally attached" to this agency (Reversed)

This agency has a great deal of personal meaning for me

I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my agency (Reversed)

Normative Commitment

I think that people these days move from company to company too often

I do not believe that a person must always be loyal to his or her organization (Reversed)

Jumping from organization to organization does not seem at all unethical to me (Reversed)

One of the major reasons I continue to work for this agency is that I believe loyalty is important and therefore feel a sense of moral obligation to remain

If I got another offer for a better job elsewhere, I would not feel it was right to leave my agency

I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to one organization

Things were better in the days when people stayed with one organization for most of their careers

I do not think that wanting to be a "company man" or "company woman" is sensible anymore (Reversed)

Continuance Commitment

I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one line up (Reversed)

It would be very hard for me to leave my agency right now, even if I wanted to

Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave my agency right now

It would not be too costly for me to leave my agency in the near future (Reversed)

Right now, staying with my agency is a matter of necessity as much as desire

I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving my agency

One of the few negative consequences of leaving this agency would be the scarcity of available alternatives

One of the major reasons why I continue to work for this agency is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice-another organization may not match the overall benefits here

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